

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PROPOSED EC INLAND WATERWAY TONNAGE CAPACITY REGULATIONS--
US LASH/SEABEE OPERATIONS

REFS: A) EC BRUSSELS A-158, JUNE 10, 1974

B) STATE 64138

1. SUMMARY: THE COUNCIL OF TRANSPORTATION MINISTERS ON
DECEMBER 11 EXCLUDED SHIP-BORNE BARGES (E.G., LASH/SEABEE)
FROM THE APPLICATION OF EC INLAND WATERWAY TONNAGE CAPACITY
REGULATIONS. WHETHER THIS DECISION IS DEFINITIVE DEPENDS ON
FURTHER STUDY. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE USG SUPPORTING
THEIR EXCLUSION WOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE COMMISSION. END
SUMMARY.

2. THE EC COUNCIL OF TRANSPORTATION MINISTERS, AT THEIR
MEETING ON DECEMBER 11, REMOVED OCEAN-BORNE BARGES FROM
THE SCOPE OF APPLICATION OF THE PROPOSED EC INLAND WATERWAY
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TONNAGE CAPACITY REGULATIONS, PENDING FURTHER CONSIDERA-

TION. THE SPECIFIC LANGUAGE OF THE COUNCIL DECISION, AS SHOWN TO US BY PAUL GRAFF, THE EC COMMISSION OFFICIAL HANDLING THE SUBJECT IS "THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMISSION AGREE THAT THE PROBLEM OF THE REGIME TO APPLY TO SHIP-BORNE BARGES WILL BE TREATED IN THE CONTEXT OF NEGOTIATIONS." (MISSION TRANSLATION) GRAFF SAID THAT THE WORD "NEGOTIATION" IN THE DECISION REFERRED TO NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE MEMBER STATES AND WITH SWITZERLAND.

3. ACCORDING TO GRAFF, WHOM WE SAW ON DEC. 16, LAST WEEK'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW SHIP-BORNE BARGES FROM THE 1972 COUNCIL DECISION, MEANS THAT THERE IS A STRONG CHANCE THAT THEY WILL NOT BE PUT BACK IN AT A LATER DATE. HE SAID THEIR WITHDRAWAL REPRESENTED A FIRST SUCCESSFUL STEP IN ARRIVING AT THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME THE US IS SEEKING, I.E., DEFINITIVE EXCLUSION OF LASH/SEABEE OPERATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY REGULATION SYSTEM (SEE REFERENCES).

4. GRAFF TOLD US THAT THE UK AND THE NETHERLANDS OPPOSED THE INCLUSION OF SHIP-BORNE BARGES BUT IT WAS THE COMMISSION WHICH HAD RECOMMENDED EXCLUSION AND FURTHER STUDY. HE ATTRIBUTED THE COMMISSION'S INITIATIVE TO THE REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY THE UNITED STATES LAST SPRING. (SEE REFERENCES)

5. BECAUSE OF A SPLIT ON THE ISSUE AMONG THE MEMBER STATES, GRAFF SAID IT WOULD BE VERY USEFUL TO HAVE FURTHER INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE EXCLUSION OF SHIP-BORN BARGES FROM THE REGULATIONS, PARTICULARLY ON THE POINT THAT THEY DO NOT INTERFERE WITH, INFLUENCE OR COMPETE DIRECTLY WITH THE TRADITIONAL INLAND WATERWAY BARGES, I.E., DATA SHOWING THAT THEY ARE A NEGLIBLE FACTOR IN THE INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT PRICE STRUCTURE. GRAFF SAID HE WOULD WELCOME AN "AID MEMOIRE" OR OTHER COMMUNICATION FROM THE USG ON THE SUBJECT.

6. REGARDING TIMING, GRAFF SAID THAT A COUNCIL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WORKING PARTY MIGHT LOOK INTO THE QUESTION OF SHIP-BORNE BARGES IN LATE SPRING AND THOUGHT A PAPER FROM US IN THE COURSE OF THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WOULD BE TIMELY. GREENWALD

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